

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

The broadcast flag will interfere with a consumer's ability to make copies of DTV content for personal use. That is the intent of the broadcast flag. The current situation is that consumers have the ability to make copies for their personal use. If the broadcast flag is not meant to interfere with this in at least one way, then why introduce it at all? I am opposed to the introduction of such a flag. Moreover, every similar law that passes, adding to the responsibility of equipment manufacturers legal requirements that are not technical in nature, increases the barrier to entry for new electronic engineering companies. Eventually only the very large companies will be able to fully meet the legal requirements which they themselves promoted. Please, do not let us fall into such a trap. The American people are depending on you to defend their freedoms -- to defend their freedoms.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

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Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

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Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

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What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

The cost impact must be an increase. There is no way that such a "feature" can actually reduce the cost of a machine because it does not simplify its design.

Other Comments:

The FCC and our Congress should spend time reconsidering the basic tenets of copyrights and what our system SHOULD INTEND to protect. We are increasingly seeing cases of "copyright frenzy". For example, I have seen companies copyright their actual copyright notice. I have also seen many companies copyright items of no value. The documents of greatest value to our country -- declaration of independence, the constitution -- are not copyrighted. The point of publishing something is to make it public. If an author intends to write something and prevent other people from seeing it, s/he should not publish. Secrets should be kept secret. Perhaps, if we insist on having some sort of law about the sharing of information, the law should be that the source of the information must be mentioned. For example, instead of requiring me to get Joe's permission to publish his works, simply require me to mention that it is Joe's work. This will benefit me by saving time that would have been spent trying to contact Joe. It benefits Joe because everyone will know that he authored the content -- and I won't mind putting his name next to it because it is free. I know that many people don't agree with this, because they have already been accustomed to the idea that they can own a piece of information. That doesn't make physical sense, but even ignoring that, just look at the words we use these days for this issue: "copyright protection", "digital rights management". "Copyright protection" refers to the laws protecting the rights of some people to copy certain things. What about the rights of everyone else? "Digital rights management" strikes an awful chord -- since when do we manage people's rights in this country? Are citizens no longer equal?